

BDC BRIEFING

15 October 1958

THAILAND

I. Political tension has mounted in recent weeks. Army units have been ordered on general alert beginning 15 October.

A. Alert may have been called only as precautionary move or in response to a coup threat by faction in ruling military elite.

B. We have report that Marshal Sarit, ruler of Thai military group plans to return unannounced to Bangkok from London prior to next Monday.

1. Sarit said to be concerned over reports of factionalism within military group.

C. [redacted] strong undercurrent of restiveness among Sarit's military supporters as they vie with each other for increased share in available power and profit.

D. Sarit may be particularly worried about loyalty of Interior Minister Praput who has been steadily improving power position.

E. Another complicating factor is that Premier Thanon much more vigorous premier in last few weeks. Sarit who earlier thought Thanon weak may now fear his inexperienced activities will lead to clash with members of military group.

F. In any event, Sarit's return may foreshadow further changes in Thai government and military hierarchy on which it based.

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